



BACK TO
SCHOOL

Congressman GEORGE MILLER

CALIFORNIA, 7TH DISTRICT (CONTRA COSTA AND SOLANO COUNTIES)

September 2005

www.house.gov/georgemiller



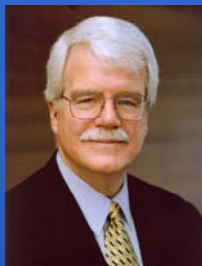
George Miller visits area schools regularly, like this one in Vacaville, to talk about his work on education.

Every child in this country deserves a high quality education. That's why I've made our local schools a top priority in Washington.



As the Senior Democrat on the House education committee in Congress, I am fighting every day to make our public schools better and college more affordable for everyone.

EDUCATION UPDATE



Stay in Touch!

Sign up for E-updates at

www.house.gov/georgemiller



My website is updated regularly with news and useful information. Plus, I send out occasional E-updates with developments on local and national issues. Registering for them is easy and confidential. And you can unsubscribe at any time. Take a look and consider signing up today! Thank you.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Concord (925) 602-1880; Richmond (510) 262-6500; Vallejo (707) 645-1888

Washington, D.C. (202) 225-2095; 2205 RHOB, Washington, D.C. 20515

Email: georgemiller@mail.house.gov

Inside this issue:

Teacher Quality	2
Student Progress	3
School Underfunding	3
Making College More Affordable	4

Feel free to send
your comments about
this newsletter...

George Miller

M.C.

Presorted Standard

W/S/ Carrier Route

BACK TO
SCHOOL



Investing in our schools and ensuring that teachers are among the most critical

A Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom

Here's the Problem: A highly qualified teacher is the single most important ingredient in a child's successful education. But we don't have nearly enough of them. Throughout California, for example, almost 1,500 high school math classes and over 800

high school science classes are taught by teachers without credentials. And many more math and science classes are

taught by teachers with credentials in fields unrelated to those subjects. The problem is worse in high-poverty schools, disproportionately affecting African-American and Hispanic students. A teacher retirement boom later this decade will make the problem more acute. And throughout our area, whether in Richmond or Concord, Vallejo



or Vacaville, many school districts lack enough money to meet all their needs, including hiring more qualified teachers. What can we do?

Here's a Solution: I introduced legislation this year to help answer that question.

The Teach Act of 2005 aims to attract highly-qualified teachers to the nation's poorest schools and offer them salary enhancements and professional development tools to keep them in those schools for long and fulfilling careers. My bill has wide support – from business leaders, teachers' unions, child advocates, and academic experts. Lou Gerstner, former chairman of IBM and the current chairman of the Teaching Commission, said the Teach Act "is the boldest, most serious, and most comprehensive federal legislation on teacher quality I have seen to date." The *San Francisco Chronicle* called it an "ambitious but carefully crafted" bill.

Teachers have a tough job

and they deserve our respect and support. By giving them that support, my bill would greatly increase the number of children taught by talented and highly-trained teachers.

<http://edworkforce.house.gov/democrats/teacherquality.html>

The Teach Act

- Pay more competitive salaries and offer tuition assistance to talented undergraduates committed to a career in education and also to established teachers working in fields like math and science.
- Provide higher pay for exemplary highly-qualified teachers and principals who transfer into the hardest-to-staff schools.
- Encourage teachers to seek professional development and mentor new teachers.
- Raise standards and training for new principals.

Making Foster Care More Successful

Here's the problem: California has approximately 50,000 children in foster care. Many of them are shuffled from one home to another or placed in ineffective and expensive institutional care. California routinely denies foster children the mental health care, behavioral support, and case management services that they need – and that federal law requires. Foster children are less likely to go on to college as a result of their turbulent upbringing.

Here's a Solution: I'm co-sponsoring the Kids' Investment, Development, and Services (KIDS) Act to help vulnerable children by safely reducing their length of stay in foster care. The bill would minimize multiple placements of children by providing guardianship payments to youth who transition from foster parents to legal guardians. Research shows that children benefit when they are adopted by guardians with whom they have an established relationship.



hat every child has the tools to succeed
l challenges for our nation.

Key Report Shows Student Progress

Students are making important progress in math and reading, according to the most recent “Nation’s Report Card,” issued in July. Much of this progress can be attributed to major school reforms that are part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 that I am proud to have co-written. The new report, The National Assessment of Educational Progress, showed that **nationwide reading and math scores among 9-year-olds and math scores among 13-year-olds are the highest ever recorded.**

Achievement among African-American and Hispanic students has surged in the last five years, thus narrowing the achievement gap



George spoke with Pittsburgh High students about his work in Congress to narrow the academic achievement gap and expand teaching opportunities.

between white and minority students. This particular assessment is the best measure

we have of student progress nationwide.

Two of the key goals of No Child are to ensure that all students are proficient in reading and math and to close the achievement gap

between white and minority students. That law was controversial from the start and it is certainly not perfect. But this latest Report Card shows that the law is beginning to reach some of its goals.

Not all the news in the report is good. High school students clearly need more help, for example, and I will soon introduce a bill to address that.

We still have a long way to go toward making schools as good as they can be. But teachers, students and parents should feel proud of what they have accomplished so far.

? <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

Education Reform Law Shortchanged by \$40 Billion

The latest assessment of student progress shows that the No Child Left Behind Act is beginning to boost student achievement in math and reading. But just imagine how much more progress our students and schools would be making if Congress and President Bush had kept their promise to fully fund this historic education law. I was one of the four principal authors of the law, and **I was there when the promise was made to combine tough accountability standards with enough money to get the job done right.** Everyone at the time agreed that it would be wasteful to spend more money on schools without reform, but that it would be cruel to enact

reforms without adequate funding. Substantial funding coupled with clear demands for better results from every student made this law historic.

But the promise was broken... and broken... and broken again. Over the last five years, Congress and the Administration have shortchanged our schools \$40 billion compared to what was promised in the law. Schools are struggling to comply with the law, but Washington appears to be giving up.

If approved, the education spending bill now pending in **Congress will provide no more funding than it did two years ago!**

**Federal School Money
Promised for 2005:**

\$34.3 billion

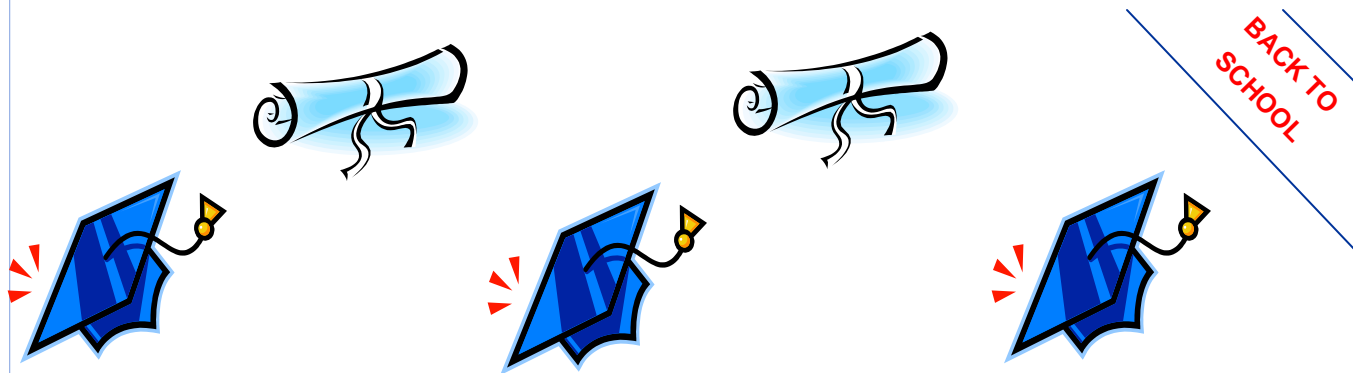
Amount Given for 2005:

\$24.5 billion

National Commitment ?

You decide.

That’s not progress. That’s not commitment. That’s not how a great nation meets the most important challenge of our time. I will continue to fight for the funding our schools need and were promised to succeed.



Fighting to Make College More Affordable for Everyone

Here's the Problem: The cost of college is putting families deeper into debt and even keeping kids from starting school. The typical student graduated from college in 2000 with more than \$19,000 in federal student loan debt, up from \$12,000 in 1993. Meanwhile, big banks are making excess profits because federal law guarantees them high rates of return on their loans to students. Education is the bedrock of individual success and leads to higher lifetime income. And the strength of our national economy depends on having the best-trained, best-educated workforce possible. **Making college more affordable should be a national priority.**

Here's a Solution: There are many ways Congress could help. I am fighting to: 1) increase the value of the Pell Grant, a federal scholarship for low- and middle-income students, by \$500 over the next five years, 2) make student loans more affordable by capping the interest rate on the loans at 6.8% instead of 8.25%, and 3) guarantee students the choice of consolidating their loans after graduation under either a fixed interest rate or variable interest rate.

It Pays to Stay in School

Fact: A typical college graduate earns nearly three-quarters more than a high school graduate over a lifetime.

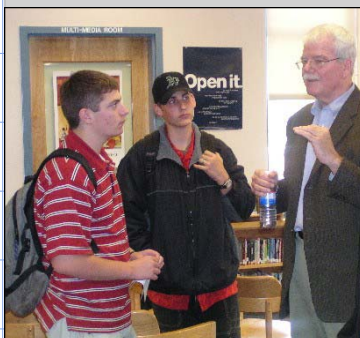
Planning to pay for college?

Learn how here:

www.finaid.org

www.pirg.org/highered/

www.fafsa.ed.gov/



George talks with Alhambra High students about college and events in Congress.

Congress could help students without increasing taxes by stopping the guaranteed subsidies paid to big lending institutions by the federal government. **Fixing the problem is simple and would yield \$8.6 billion in savings to expand low-interest loans.**

But the Republican majority on the House education committee rejected my amendment to do this in a recent bill. They agreed to cut the subsidies but took the savings away from student loans altogether and plan to use the money instead to reduce the federal budget deficit that has grown sharply since they took control of Congress. But I'm still fighting for you.



<http://edworkforce.house.gov/democrats/higheredinfo.html>

Investing in America's Workforce

Here's the Problem: Too many American jobs are being lost to overseas competition and outsourcing, while at the same time we're importing skilled workers. Job growth is picking up but long-term unemployment remains a problem. And America is not investing in the development of its workforce. This hurts our communities and puts America at a technological and competitive disadvantage.

Here's a Solution: I am working to ensure that workers have the skills that employers seek. For example, we could: 1) encourage partnerships between businesses and universities to upgrade college laboratory technologies, 2) offer incentives for businesses and universities to provide tuition assistance for employees to pursue careers in math, engineering, health, and information services, and 3) create new "job opportunity grants" to assist laid-off workers who require education or training to reenter the workforce.



Students at Clayton Valley High in Concord taught George about electrical engineering and he discussed his efforts in Congress to invest in new technology and job training.

SIGN UP FOR MILLER E-UPDATES www.house.gov/georgemiller